2: Redfield & Villa Rojas E-4,5 (1938) 1939 NYS Tzeltal NYS

The boy is expected to live for a year with the girl's parents; then he makes his own home, usually near that of his father. If the boy's parents are sufficiently powerful, they may pay the girl's parents twelve pesos in lieu of the year's service. Villa was informed that a woman unable to pay a debt or a fine may be taken as a secondary wife by any married man who will pay the debt or fine; that a woman who loses her virginity may be bought similarly of her parents for a little rum; and that in the case of any of these polygynous marriages, a single household is maintained. No such household was observed.

No information was obtained on birth customs,[30] or on customs in connection with death.[31]

Blom and LaFarge describe a church festival held at Tecojá ranch on June 22 and 23.[32] When Villa visited the highland villages the carnival was being celebrated. In Tenejapa on February 20 he witnessed the "Festival of the Flags" (*tahimalkin*). The (annually elected) leaders of the festival, the *alfereces*, assembled in the morning at the church. Each man conveyed a red banner with green edges, fastened to a pole, and each held in his mouth a short hook on which an orange was impaled. Nothing was learned as to the significance of these objects. The alfereces remained for a time inside the church drinking rum and singing. They then went by fours to pray in turn before each of the crosses set up in the village. The rest of the day they spent visiting the house of each one of them in turn; in each house they sang the same song sung in the church; in each the host offered rum, so that by nightfall all were drunk. These acts were to be twice repeated during the days following. They had for their stated purpose the announcement of the days of carnival. On the following Thursday the carnival became generally celebrated, and many natives went out costumed and masked.

The alfereces were accompanied by musicians, and also by three personages carrying the dried bodies of, respectively, a wild cat, a rodent called *saben*, and an iguana. Villa was informed that these animals are used in a later festal pantomime in which the alfereces enact a sowing, and in which these animals are represented as performing their characteristic mischief.

Villa observed other elements of the carnival ritual in Oxchuc. On Thursday, February 24, Indians of the calpul of Santo Tomás assembled in the church where they prayed for a time before the large altar, and then danced and drank rum in the nave. The dance was performed alternately by men and by women, and was accompanied by music from a harp, a guitar, and a rattle made of a calabash and a deer's hoof. On the following day these acts were performed by Indians of the other calpul; on this occasion the music was furnished by two drums and a flute, and the leader (*capitán*) was dressed in red. On this latter day natives of the calpul of Santo Tomás moved in procession through the streets; four individuals bore each a large pole to which were fastened ribbons of various colors; a fifth carried a red banner.

[30] Blom and LaFarge, 1927, 2:358.
[31] *Ibid.*, 2:360–362.
[32] *Ibid.*, 2:354–365.
[33] The frequent association, in Middle America, of small animals, especially furred animals, with festivals, in connection with ideas of fertility and of festal buffoonery, has been noted. See Redfield, 1936, pp. 831–843.

Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
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241 782 *chin-uch* (May 20–June 8), an offering is made to the supernatural being which reigns over it. The natives have vague notions of the nature of this being. They say [825] that *uch* is the name of a small insect which spoils the pozole and, also, of the *tlacuache* or *zarigueya* which often destroys the milpa. The offering, hung at the entrance of the hut, consists of a ball of pozole wrapped in plantain leaf, a red chile, a tortilla, an ear of corn, and a little stick like the kind used to turn the ear cooking over hot coals. 241 782 787 All objects are minute in size. When the offering achieves its purpose, on the completion of a 20-day period, the atmosphere becomes hazy "as if there were smoke." It is explained that "the chin-uch burned its house," which forecasts a favorable sun for development of the milpa. If such a sign should not appear on the indicated date or at the end of the next month of *mukul-uch* (June 9–28), the forecast is ominous and indicates that the rains will be excessive, greatly harming the milpa.

778 796 Another mukul-mixa is performed in Oxchuc, in homage to the hill called Ikal-Ajau, [184] near the ceremonial center, of which the Indians say "it is a living hill." The name of the hill is that of the ancient hill worshipped by the Oxchueqeños. Nuñez de la Vega (in Becerra, 1933, p. 293) reports: "Those of Oxchuc and other towns of Los Llanos venerate very much the idol which they call Icalajau, which means principal Negro or [789] lord of the Negroes." This Mass, performed the first days of June, prevents locusts and other plagues from coming.

241 78 Once the crop is in the granary, other family prayers are said before the household cross, to give thanks for the good received and to petition the supernatural beings to protect the grain from insects and rodents.

Other Subsistence Resources

262 235 [231] [457] Other food resources include raising chickens and pigs. A family averages about 10 chickens, using the eggs as money when

[P 202-B]

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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which have the power to mislead, give illness, or capture people to work for them. Only the most powerful curers and witches, and the very greedy approach these spirits for they are reputed to be very "live" and maliciously clever. Snakes are the offspring of the hill and do the bidding of the hill owners.

Wealth in the form of livestock, corn, or gold can be gained from some of the cave owners upon request, but there is danger in receiving these gifts since they must be reciprocated. Among the cave owners who give gifts is Don Klabil, a deceased moneylender of the neighboring town. After his death in the 1940s, his spirit went to live in the hill bordering the two towns. People say that when he was alive he used to get money from the true owner of the cave. Those who have been inside the cave say it is filled with animals—cattle, horses, rabbits—which drink at a large interior lake. The appropriate approach for requesting wealth is to go on Thursday, "when the earth is open," and burn candles and incense. When the request is granted, the recipient must light candles at the cave every Thursday, and after his death he must work forever for the cave owner. It is said that at his death his wealth dies with him—usually all has been spent, and in fact children are left poor. Some say the spirit of the firstborn child of the recipient must be given to the owner to work for him. For this reason, there is no envy felt by neighbors when they see the increasing wealth of a man who has visited the caves and received such gains and he is doubly protected because no one can hurt an "enchanted man" (one who has entered the cave) with witchcraft.

Ladinos' belief in the cave owners gives support to the Indians' credence in their power. Ladinos inquire of Indians where they can find treasures. Once the request to the hill owners is made, it is essential to follow through correctly. Everyone in town knows the story of Martin Bautista, a curer who went to speak to the true owner of the hill in which Don Klabil lives.

He knew how to talk to the owner. The owner told him that at midnight on the following day, he would give him what he wanted. At midnight Maria, his wife, was alone in the house. She heard a noise and the sound of "Andale, burro!" *Then there was a knock at the door. When the*

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Guarding the crops. The crops must be guarded against intruders. The farmers sometimes sleep in the fields when they expect animals to steal the ripening corn. They observe the habits of these intruders and develop belief systems which help them organize opposition:

The raccoon steals maize seeds. He pushes down cornstalks when they are in elote and steals the cob. He is very smart. He can tell whether the owner is sleeping or not by putting his hand on his own anus. If his anus is cold, the owner is awake; if it is hot the owner is asleep and he enters.

Some men who live below in Alannantik have good dogs. They planted their milpa, and the next night wanted to hunt. "You stay with one dog,"

TABLE 9. Schedule of Activities in Bean Production

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Activity	*Date*	*No. of days necessary for task*	*Helpers*	*Tools*
Cleaning and preparation of soil is same as for corn (Table 6)				
Ground beans				
Plant between rows of corn	Mar. 1	2	3 exchange workers	Digging stick
Cultivate	Apr. 19	3	2 exchange workers	Hoe
Harvest, pulling up entire plants and putting them in burlap bags	July 10	2		
Store in eaves of house				Burlap bags
When pods are very dry, beat bag with stick to depod beans	Sept. 1	2	women of household	Stick
Pole beans				
Plant, following the second hoeing of corn, setting seeds near each hillock of corn	May 2	1		Digging stick
Wind the vines up on corn stalk; tie	June	1		
Cut pods and store in burlap bags in eaves of house	Nov.	1		Burlap bags
Shell beans as they are used				

SOURCE: Same as for Table 6.

[115]

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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241 *they said to me, "while we go over with the other two." I fell asleep. Then*
825 *the raccoon entered. And so I believe the raccoon is very bright.*
Also there is the wild pig, who is less bright than the raccoon.

Another "thief" of the milpa is a small black insect which eats beans. These are eliminated in the following way:

[291] *When we plant beans, the women go with us wearing a new skirt and a new shawl. They walk near the plants, waving the shawl. The animals die. It has to be a new skirt. My mother proved it. She went with an old skirt, and she saw that they did not die. They just fled to the mountain out of shame. It is the smell of the old skirt that scared them away.*

241 If many animals are eating the crops, Indians buy three twenty-cent can-
825 dles. They take them to the fields and light them, praying in Tzeltal:
782 "God, holy world, please look at me and speak to the little animals. God,
788 holy rock, holy forest, please look at me, hear me, speak to the animals."

The candles are media through which communication is made with the gods as well as gifts which seal the contract with the gods ensuring their protection and guardianship over the crops.

241 Guarding the crops also involves avoidance of certain kinds of behavior
776 by the farmer and his wife. Farmers must always avoid irritating the spir-
784 its of the heaven who control the elements which make the growth of the crop possible. One informant explained:

One should not have sexual relations with anyone in the milpa because the Father Sun [Tatik K'ak'al] *gets angry or "ends his heart." He will not give crops. He gets very hot. One time, many women in town were looking for lovers. They would have sexual relations with boys in the daytime. The Father Sun got angry and caused the crops to burn. There was very little corn. The price went up to twenty cents a liter. People bought bread and mixed it with the nixtamal.*

It is different if a man is married to a woman in the church. The Tatik K'ak'al does not get angry. The Tatik K'ak'al does not have a woman of his own, and so he gets jealous if he sees people having sexual relations in the milpa in the daytime.

But if you have relations at night with a man in the milpa, Our grand-

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mother the Moon gets angry. This might cause an eclipse of the moon, and the crops will suffer because there will be no sun.

There is no prohibition, however, against having sexual relations prior to planting or at other crucial stages, as there are for other Maya Indians (Wagley 1941:34). [171]

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During the growing season, candles are lit in the milpa as protection against wind as well as robbers, who "lose their luck" when this is done.

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The spirits' care of the crops. The crops have souls, given by the spirits, which will be lost if they are not cared for. The spirits "watch over the crops as parents watch over their children." The term for seed (*yal*) is a metaphorical extension of the term for "child of a woman."

The following myths give different, occasionally contradictory versions of the origin of crops. This central truth emerges in all of them: The spirits have given us our crops and will continue to do so as long as we offer thanks in the form of ceremonies and gifts to them. [782]

Santo Tomás [*the patron saint of Oxchuk*] *had intercourse with Santa Lucía. She wanted* [asked for] *the soul of corn, and he gave her the seed of corn. Then there came forth beans, corn, and wheat. But then all the saints of San Bartolo and San Miguel* [*neighboring towns*] *asked for the soul of corn. Then the soul of beans left us and went to hot country. Now it does not grow well in the pueblo. Also, the avocado has gone to Comitán. The matasano and ground beans went to Oxchuk when Santa Lucía fought with Santo Tomás.* [539]

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The myth of the origin of crops overlays an older myth which has parallels in other groups of Maya-speaking Indians (Castro 1965, Wagley 1941:20).

Formerly, during a famine, there was hunger. The tzisim, *an insect of Ariola, came to take the corn from underground. Thus the ancestors got their first seed. For this reason, people say that corn was born underground, brought up by the tzisim. But I believe God sent us corn.* [539]

241 776 853 539

Another version has synthesized the role of the saints and that of the animal agent.

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241 796 825 539 *The ant* [alielo] *brings corn out of the house. They say that a saint passed on horseback. The ant came to the saint, bringing a grain of corn. He stood before the saint, and the saint said, "Where are you going with the corn?" The ant replied, "To the storeroom." The saint inquired, "Which one?" The ant went to show the saint a stone as large as a church into which he entered to take out corn. There was white, yellow, and red corn.*

The saint returned to heaven and spoke to San Bartolo. San Bartolo asked, "Where is it?" The saint replied, "I will show you."

San Bartolo went with Santo Tomás to see the stone. Santo Tomás said, "Good, let us figure out how to destroy this stone." San Bartolo said, "Let us go talk to a carpenter." At this moment, a carpenter came. They asked him to cut the stone. "Good," said the carpenter, "I will do it."

But the carpenter could not open the stone. They went to another carpenter—there were three in this mountain. The first couldn't, nor could the second. The third carpenter said, "Let us talk to the tunselek [*woodpecker*]. *He is a good carpenter."*

The first two birds had broken their beaks, and the saints warned the woodpecker that he should be careful or he would fail with the stone. The woodpecker broke open the stone, and all the corn seed—yellow, red, and white—fell out. People should not kill these birds because they broke open the rock where the seeds were kept.

241 796 The necessity for showing respect to crops because of their relationship to the saints is expressed in the following account:

[539] *Corn must be treated with respect, since it is the body of the Virgin. You cannot step on anything which is for eating—beans, corn, or wheat —or the Virgin will become angry. Particular care has to be taken at the harvest to avoid offending the saints.*

Some of the saints serve man by helping to spread the cultivation of crops, as in the case of San Isidro, the patron saint of milpas.

[539] *The Padre told us that San Isidro helps the farmers. Formerly there was only milpa here where there is irrigated land. San Isidro went up to the*

There is no double standard for extramarital sexual relations, although men abuse the prohibition more often than women, judging from court cases. The ability the women has to assert herself rests on her economic contribution in pottery-making and on the fact that female household help is not part of the labor market.

Female sexuality has the connotation of negative power over male sexuality. A woman should not step over a man's feet or his clothing since she could affect his virility. This negative power emanates from the odors of a woman's body, and is captured by anything in contact with it. A woman's skirt cast over the head of a bull can tame him, and the water used by a woman to wash her body, particularly the vagina if she has had children, is drunk to cure snake bites because it is very "cold."

Sexuality is seldom extended beyond persons to material objects. There is some feeling that a man's tools, especially the machete and hoe, are male and that a woman's tools, especially the grinding stone, are female. Corn is a crop of men, while beans are a woman's crop, identified with the Virgin. But I could not get much farther with such distinctions.

The accidents of birth determine the recruitment of successive generations into the family of orientation. There is no outright adoption, but a child may be "lent" to a childless couple, usually by a sibling of one of the spouses, or a grandchild may take up residence in the house of a grandparent when all the children have moved to separate residences. Parents discipline a badly behaved child with the threat, "I am going to sell you to care for someone's house," but I have never known of a case of outright sale of a child.

The selection of a spouse is a decision based on both universalistic as well as particularistic considerations. Both the boy and the girl should be hardworking, sober, and dutiful residents of the same section of the dual division. It is considered to be of greater importance that the boy feel affection toward the girl than vice versa. The "taking of the heart" is a test of the strength and exclusiveness of the boy's interest in his chosen mate, and there is no counterpart for the girl. Although there is no term for romantic love, the closest approximation being "want" or "ask for" a woman, there is an awareness of the importance of a warm, affectionate basis if a marriage relationship is to last "at least until the day after tomorrow." A suitor is accepted if he is known to be a hard worker and if he

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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sion: "I pay respect to my elders. I greet my brothers and my children [extension of kinship terms]. To all I give respect. Thus I fare well. I have not been killed, nor have I been sick."

A good man is a generous host, expressed in the phrase, "he gives many tortillas." He serves his community in public office but avoids the appearance of seeking power or self-aggrandizement. When he gives orders, it is in a soft, low tone, supplicating rather than ordering with the phrase, "If you would please lend a hand." He gives thanks readily for any service rendered both to God and to his fellow man. He avoids any show of anger, and is always careful to show consideration of others. Those who are of "another heart" or "two-hearted" are the opposite, seeking disputes, "thinking small," "being miserly," and of a "very black soul."

The heightened awareness of the state of the heart of others comes from the ever-present fear of witchcraft. Since the people feel their survival depends upon perception of evil heart before it strikes, they develop an acute sense of the behavioral clues that indicate its presence.

Conformity and deviance. Conventional or preferred behavior is characterized as "reasonable." The phrase "ʔiʔ rason," to take reason or understanding, is applied to a child who is expected to have reason at the age of twelve years or so, as well as to the arrival at agreement of competing parties, as in the case of betrothal.

Reasonable behavior is any behavior conforming to socially accepted understandings of what the world is. These include what a person of non-Indian culture might characterize as beliefs based on faith. They "know" that there are hill spirits, wood spirits who cut off people's heads, and men who transform themselves into animals. Occasionally they subject given understandings to empirical tests: one woman tested the belief that a woman could rid the milpa of insect pests only by walking through a planted field wearing a new skirt; she walked through the field wearing a worn skirt and her belief was confirmed when she found that the insect pests were not killed but just fled and returned later. Empiricism is not lacking; the difference between the content of their category of what is rational or reasonable and ours is based on the premises, not the process of reasoning.

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credit to insects who carried it from the hills. Still another myth synthesizes both pre-Conquest and Catholic agents: San Antonio, seeing an insect bearing a kernel of corn, persuaded a woodpecker to break open the rock which blocked the entrance to the hill where the corn was stored and then organized the insects to bring forth the corn. The contradictions in these myths do not motivate the people to bring the several versions into line with one another because the rituals associated with beliefs concerning crops provide an overall insurance rather than a specific contract. The Indians do not trust their security to any one saint or even group of deities. The two candles lit in the milpa following the harvest are an offering to the "owner of the earth"; along with this, offerings of corncobs are made to the saints in the church and to the house saint. Even the birds are left an offering of corn kernels in the fields after the harvest so that they will not be jealous of the farmer.

These myths fail to provide specific charters for action. What they do provide is a set of dispositions to behave in certain ways. The underlying disposition is that of self-imposed guilt and recrimination. The ancestors left their cave because the people failed to give them a fiesta; the spirit of money left the town because the religious officials in the past failed to adorn the church and improvidently strewed the floor with green peso notes in place of pine needles. Sickness and poverty are attributed to their own failures.

Another disposition is that of appeasement through ceremonial entertainment. This is carried out in the fiestas for the spirits of the church and the spirits of the heaven just as for the spirits of the house, caves, springs, and hills surrounding the town. Community-wide disaster is interpreted as a direct result of failure to perform rituals establishing reciprocity with the spirits. When individuals face crop loss, they review their own ritual obligations to see what went wrong. The curing ceremony is another effort to appease the devil whom the witch has persuaded to give illness to his victim.

A third such disposition is to project human conflict into the supernatural sphere. The conflict between Santa Lucía and the patron saint of Oxchuk, Santo Tomás was taken to be the reason for the church tower being